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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on African education and socialization processes and how these have evolved and spread through the African cultural diaspora to other parts of the world, before, during, and after the slave trade and the colonial period. The history of education on the African continent is explored, followed by African American education, and the educational and sociological patterns that have prevented educational advancement and ensured domination to some extent. The paper then looks at how to correct the damage to the teaching and learning processes and addresses areas of the teacher education curriculum. A number of programmatic suggestions are offered, including: (1) practicum sites in schools where the overwhelming majority of teachers are successful with African American students; (2) a valid internship with a master teacher; (3) master professors in teacher education programs; (4) an appropriate cultural knowledge base; (5) study of the origin, dynamics, and consequences of white supremacy; (6) performance criteria and professional knowledge for trainers; (7) theory and its application for trainees; (8) judging the quality of teaching; and (9) networking in the professional community. The study suggests that the cycle of school failure for traditionally excluded students can be broken by looking closely at teachers and teacher educators who do not fail and then imitating them. (Contains 87 references.) (ND)

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Teacher Education from an African American Perspective

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The African continent was the home of the original human population. For nearly 100,000 years, Africa was home to the only human population (Homo sapiens sapiens) on the earth (Diop, 1991). Then the migrations scattered Africans all over the world to develop new human societies and phenotypes (falsely referred to as "races"). Those who remained on the continent continued to develop African cultural forms. Among these forms were included designs of education and socialization.

Cheikh Anta Diop (1978) has argued that at the cultural deep structural level, the African continent as a whole formed a cultural "cradle," the southern cradle. This shared continental cultural deep structure evolved and spread itself in an African cultural diaspora to other parts of the world, including North and South America, before the slave trade and the colonial period, and during and after both of them.

Africans have faced and solved the problem of the design of education and socialization, as a part of Africa's broad cultural evolution. So when I approach this topic from an African perspective, I do not approach it merely as

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an individual of African descent, expressing a personal point of view. My attempt is to synthesize my specific study of African history and culture, ancient and modern, as well as the history and culture of Africans in the Western diaspora, including both North and South America, and specifically, the United States. I am interested in the education of African people within this context. How did African people educate themselves? What was the aim, method and content of African systems?

Often, when "minority" group members in the United States are asked to express themselves from a particular ethnic ("black") point of view, implicit in the invitation is the expectation that the person will react mainly to conditions of oppression and "minority status," and/or will offer superficial insights into certain superficial though unique cultural practices, such as ethnic slang. My studies have yielded information to show that there is much more to African perspectives than this (Hilliard, 1995b). African perspectives are rooted in African experiences, cultural and political. The collective African cultural deep-structural perspective on education and socialization in its pre-foreign or non-foreign form, must be the starting point for our discussion. Again, how did Africans educate themselves?

Of course, the entire experience of African people must be taken into account, including the period of the MAAFA (the terror and horror of invasions, slavery, colonization, apartheid and white supremacy). But the story must begin at the beginning, not at the end. <u>And it must be a story, not an episode!</u>

This discussion is necessary because of the common practice of beginning

an analysis of African education/socialization problems as if there were no pre-slavery antecedents, or as if pre-slavery indigenous African education antecedents were "primitive," "pagan" or "savage," and therefore unimportant or irrelevant, if not detrimental. Even if these views are not held explicitly, few educators seem to know anything at all about the education/socialization experience of Africans, pre-slavery, during slavery or post-slavery. Worse still, they may rely on Hollywood images for whatever fuzzy impressions they may have.

There is today in general a profound absence of respect for African traditions, even by people of African descent who have not been taught their traditions. This has resulted in a situation where problems of education of African people, and problems of education of people in general, are considered without reference to the point of view and practices manifest in the cultural tradition of Africans. African points of view and resulting practices are a part of the world education tradition, not just the African. Some have had a powerful impact on world civilization (Obenga, 1992, 1995).

African views must be a part of any discussion of the design of education today, especially the education/socialization of Africans. Contemporary views about teaching and learning in the United States for African American populations tend to be acultural and ahistorical as well as apolitical. It is important to emphasize that the essence of a group's identity is cultural, not its income level or its numerical ("minority") status. There is a defining African and an African American culture which is shared by most people of African descent. It

is powerful enough that it must be considered if African people are to be understood and served in education as in other areas.

Systematic study of culture, history and politics as variables in educational research to explain school achievement, or the lack of it, is done rarely if at all, especially in the case of Africans. As a result, overwhelmingly, problems in teaching and learning are defined as problems of student deficiency, family deficiency, community deficiency, or even "cultural deficiencies" ("cultural deprivation" or "cultural disadvantage").

African American students are said to be more retarded, more emotionally disturbed, more learning disabled than others. Families are said to be dysfunctional, as are the communities from which students come. As a result, remedial education strategies take on the character of therapy, externally designed and implemented. Children are seen as "culturally deprived," "culturally disadvantaged" or "at risk." With such a limited and distorted problem definition, and with not recognition or respect for African ethnicity, it is impossible to pose valid remedies for low student achievement, including the design of valid teacher education.

At the same time there is a failure to examine the educational service systems systematically. In particular, there is a failure to account for the political and economic arrangements that impose themselves on the context of teaching and learning. For example, popular theories of learning in educational psychology during the 40's and 50's, part of the era of intensive segregation, did

not address the issue of a segregated society and its structured inequalities in education (Weinberg, 1977: see especially commentary on John Dewey and his South Africa visit). In fact, these theories have yet to do so in any meaningful way. Moreover, today's theories of teaching and learning fail to account for the "savage inequalities" in the service delivery system (Kozol, 1991). Yet the political realities determine the structure of education systems in a clear way, e.g., school segregation.

An African perspective on teacher education must take into account two primary realities: that of the African cultural tradition and that of the political/economic environment within which people of African descent have been situated, especially for the last four centuries. It is the intersection of culture and the political economy that has produced the context for socialization and education, which is our current problem.

AFRICAN HISTORY OF EDUCATION

Abundant oral and written records exist to describe the history of education on the African continent, especially its ancient and indigenous forms (Tedla, 1995). The best recorded ancient tradition of primary, secondary and higher education in the entire world is found in the Nile valley complex of cultures. This includes Cushitic and Kemetic centers of high culture, that is "Ethiopia," Somalia, Sudan, Nubia and Egypt. Ancient texts exist in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, texts containing philosophy, religion, science and the arts (Budge, 1928; Diop, 1991;

Hilliard, 1989, 1986, 1985; Obenga, 1992, 1995; Unesco, 1981). Not only are these traditions ancient, they are also profound models for excellence in education.

Vast technical complexes and the residuals of a broad, general culture, reflect the high level of intellectual development of African culture in the Nile valley complex. Selecting the year 2,000 before the Common Era (B.C.E.), in the nation of Kemet (Egypt), we can use the ancient texts, monuments and architecture to reveal highly sophisticated higher education and highly developed arts, sciences, theology and philosophy (Budge, 1928; Hilliard, 1985, 1986, 1989; Van Sertima, 1989) existing in Africa earlier than anywhere else on earth. (That 2,000 B.C.E. date is also pre-Europe and pre-Greece, even mythical or pre-"Heroic-age" Greece.) As a result, an educator who wishes to understand indigenous Africa, must understand how education was conducted in the Nile valley complex. In fact, world education systems, including the Western world, must understand the Nile valley cultures to understand themselves (Obenga, 1992).

However, as Dr. John Henrick Clarke, the great African historian, has said, in order to understand the culture on the continent of Africa, it is necessary to understand the evolution of culture in <u>all</u> of the major river valleys of the continent, not just the Nile valley, and the relationship among the cultures developed in those river valleys (Middleton & Hilliard, 1993). For example, the Niger river valley in West Africa, similar in many ways, culturally, to the Nile river valley, produced great higher education institutions at Timbuktu, Jenne, Gao

(Austin, 1984; DuBois, 1969; Griaule, 1972; Griaule & Dieterlen, 1986; Saad, 1983; Temple, 1976). The Niger river valley produced, side by side, a great, Islamic-based higher-education system, and a great indigenous African higher education system, represented in the philosophy and theology of the Dogan of Mali and others. Many writers have also referred to these ancient traditions as African 'secret' societies, which were systems of indigenous education that frequently had parallel gender tracks.

For example, in West Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone, there is the Poro society for young males the Sande society for young women. There are a handful of references that describe these indigenous education systems from the inside (Ainsworth, 1967; Bengu, 1975; Erny, 1973; Harley, 1960s; James, 1976; Kenyatta, 1965; Lave, 1977; Niangoran-Bouah, 1984 & 1985; Somé, 1994; Thompson, 1981, 1983). African 'initiation' systems are little known and are grossly underestimated.

No full development of a description of African educational and socialization processes is possible in the space available for this manuscript; however, we may say that there is a cultural deep structure to African continental education that reflects special African aims, methods and contents. In simple, summative terms we may say that, continent-wide, Africans regarded the education process as a transformative process, one in which a person becomes not only schooled but socialized. A person becomes different, a person becomes more godlike, more human, by virtue of the cultivation rendered through the education and socialization process. It was a process rooted in a world view

where there was a belief in human perfectibility, the belief that humans could indeed become more like god. Basic skills were merely the lowest level of education. The development of character, humaneness and spirituality were higher levels of attainment. Africans did not come to the Western hemisphere empty-handed or devoid of culture.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY, THEORY AND PEDAGOGY

One problem with current forms of teacher education is that most are attached to a world view that asserts the exact opposite of human perfectibility.

> During the 1980s, I taught a course at Valparaiso University on modern American political thought. The students read authors across the political spectrum, from the Marxist left to the libertarian right. A question on the final exam asked them to name (and assess) which of the writers they had read they most agreed with. The invariable winner was Irving Kristol--and not just among those who had shared his neoconservative views on entering the course. He converted paleocons on his right as well as liberals on his left.
> My students were overwhelmingly middle-class, and Mr. Kristol's popularity among them was no surprise. Neoconservatism, one might say, is the natural political expression of the bourgeois experience. It defines the political common sense of the unalienated American majority—or it does, at least, in the hands of its founder and most skilled advocate. Mr. Kristol possesses a genius for making his sophisticated and nuanced arguments appear the commonplaces of everyman. . . .
> Mr. Kristol proposed instead not a retreat to a preideological politics--under modern conditions, he understood, a politics entirely without ideology was a politics disarmed--but rather a politics of bourgeois modernity. He urged a social philosophy based in the moderate "Anglo-Scottish" Enlightenment (e.g. Adam Smith), attuned to the modest optimism of the American Revolution and expressed in a democratic capitalism dedicated to human advance but inoculated against dreams of human perfection. (Neuchterlein, 1995).

Therefore, the problem with teacher education from an African perspective is a problem of theory as well as practice. There are alternatives to Kristol. He can only speak for some. African alternatives must be considered, especially for Africans.

In order to become more like God, Africans believed in an education that was directed at the mind, the body and the spirit, inseparable parts of our human individual and community whole. The African world view does not emphasize individuals. The individual is a part of a group, an ethnic group, a collective. The individual is bonded through the education/socialization process. The ideal for both the person and the group was to become god-like, specifically in adhering to the principles of MAAT (truth, justice, order, reciprocity, harmony and balance) (Obenga, 1995). MAAT is shown by Obenga to be a core African value system, from east to west Africa, and from north to south.

Africans expected that, with cultivation, the African mind could be developed to higher and higher levels, from the concrete to the abstract, from the profane to the divine. One way of expressing these levels of mental attainment that come as a consequence of a spiritually oriented training process is that offered by the traditional practices of the Dogon. For the Dogon, education is virtually a life-long process. At the first level, Giri So, as Marimba Ani has shown (Ani, 1994), is the word at face value, or simply perception without understanding. As the student increased in depth of knowledge and understanding, they reach the second level, Benne So, or the 'word from the

side," which means, having sight and developing a perspective. The third level is Bolo So, or "the word from behind," which means the development of insight. The final level was So Dayi, the "clear word," meaning the development of vision. Two French anthropologists, Dieterlen and Griaule (Griaule, 1972; Griaule & Dieterlen, 1986) spent more than a decade being initiated into Dogan secret society, without reaching the level of the clear word. This process is said to take many years.

The aim of African education for the mind could not be separated from education for the body, which was also seen as a divine temple, housing a spirit. As a result, the education for mind and body was also linked to education for the spirit. Therefore, in African tradition, it is the role for the teacher to appeal to the intellect, to appeal to the humanity, to appeal to the physical, and to appeal to the spiritual in their students. Of course, in order to make such an appeal, one must be convinced of the inherent intellectual capability of students, the inherent humanity of students, the inherent physical capability of students, and the inherent spiritual character of students.

Quite clearly, an education process that has these things as its goals requires a corresponding kind of teacher education. African methods of education emphasize the tutorial, apprenticeship and social learning. The content of the education process included those things that would help the student to advance not only themselves but their ethnic family as well.

Any honest reading of the evolution of education practices on the African

continent would have to acknowledge the brilliance of Africans in teaching and learning. Invaders, colonizers and slavers met Africans who were excellent at teaching and learning, and who remained excellent even during the slavery, colonization and apartheid. Some researchers have discovered the African genius in teaching (Ainsworth, 1967; DuBois, 1969; Erny, 1973; Geber, 1958; Pearce, 1977).

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

The struggle of African people to maintain a functioning educational tradition is documented in the works of Carter G. Woodson (1917, 1977), James Anderson (1988), Edward Wilmont Blyden (1994), W.E.B. DuBois (1973)(Aptheker, 1973; King, 1971; Spivey, 1978; Webber, 1978).

Not only were Africans enslaved and colonized, their oppressors mounted massive cultural assaults to change the African, to break the bonds, to destroy MAATian values. The oppressors practiced cultural genocide and cultural totalitarianism.

Independent African schools were developed, in secret, in the years before the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) in the United States. African Freedom schools were developed and flourished by the hundreds, <u>independently</u> supported by the African community in the years immediately following slavery. They were destroyed by policies of the Freedmans Bureau, an agency that was supposed to be helpful. Many of these schools were forced to close.

At the higher education level, as represented in historically black colleges and universities (both public and private) and in the public schools, many hundreds of examples of excellent education, designed and implemented by Africans have been found (Bond, 1972; Sizemore, 1988; Sizemore, Brosard & Harrigan, 1982). While the African cultural flavor of these schools diminished with time because of oppression, especially attempts at ethnic cleansing, they still demonstrated the power of teaching and learning with African students.

These brief historical flashes should help us to understand the nature of the problem that we face as we begin to think about the preparation of teachers in 1995. Traditional teacher education in the United States has evolved a general orientation that seems to suggest that teaching is primarily a technological or technical practice. A view of the teacher as technician seems to be emerging. This determines the nature of teacher education. In the African tradition, the teacher was less a technician than a mother, father, or elder: in short, a nurturer. In American education, when learning does not occur, the overwhelming view is that students have problems. Consequently, many of our resources are directed at the discovery of these "problems," and remedies are proposed for problems as we perceive them to be.

Undoubtably, there will be improvements to teaching and learning by virtue of research and the development of some technical skills; however, given the fact that universal high-quality education has already been demonstrated, in the absence of the new technologies in teaching, should give us pause. What is the

nature of teacher education for teachers who are to be nurturers, who do not doubt the capacities of the students, who respect the culture of the community?

THE MISEDUCATION OF AFRICANS: THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS AND ACADEMICIANS

Over the past four centuries Africans have endured overt white supremacist belief and behaviors. The schools have been used as one of the major tools to structure the domination of Africans by Europeans through curriculum, school structure and methods of instruction and public policy (Anderson, 1988; Blyden, 1994; Chase, 1977; Cruse, 1967; Delpit, 1995; King, 1971; Kozol, 1991; Oakes, 1985; Rodney, 1922; Spivey, 1978; Williams, 1974; Woodson, 1919, 1933). I do not believe that the full import of this fact has yet been understood. Not only have Africans been deprived of school, but school itself has been used a tool to prevent educational advancement and to ensure domination. To some extent, the teacher education curriculum has been used to rationalize domination and itself has sometimes been a tool of domination. For example, widely accepted psychological theories of intellectual inferiority of African populations propounded by psychologists that serve as a foundation in teacher education, leading to invalid labeling and invalid remedial teaching, is but one example (Gould, 1981; Guthrie, 1976; Hehir & Latus, 1993; Heller, Holtzman & Messic, 1982; Hilliard, 1984, 1994, 1995a; Jensen, 1980; Kamin, 1974; Murray & Herrnstein, 1994).

Similarly, educational sociology attributes school failure to black family pathology, and educational anthropology (Lewis, 1973; Lutz & Collins, 1993) has

attributed school failure to black community or cultural pathology, and educational history has ignored the fact that Africans had a sophisticated and powerful educational process (Frederickson, 1971; Hegel, 1831; Hodge, Struckmann & Trost, 1975; Lutz & Collins, 1993; Montagu, 1980; Willhelm, 1971). With abundant justification, we may actually call the role that some academic teacher education "foundations" coursework has played in the design of education, "the foundations of miseducation."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

And so we have two problems. On the one hand, we must undo the damage that has been done, and is still being done, to the teaching and learning process, and to African and other students, by years of miseducation, as a consequence of slavery, segregation, colonization and apartheid. On the other hand, we must clean up those areas of the curriculum which have tolerated or supported these practices. We must correct the record! We must document the vast experience of successful teachers, Africans and others, with the African population, and we must enrich the content of the curriculum with documentation of the African experience.

Many have been successful where currently popular educational theories would have predicted that there would be failure (Backler & Eakin, 1993; Bond, 1972; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sizemore, 1988; Sizemore, Brosard & Harrigan, 1982). So we must ask, how were the teachers trained who worked in the schools that

do not fail the children? This has not been done in any major way. Few educational research dollars have been devoted to this topic. Yet there is a rich body of information which would enable us to transform education. This body of information would help to erase the doubt about human capacity, and particularly about the capacity of African students, a doubt that has been produced by largely unrebutted white supremacy scholarship over the past four centuries. It would challenge many of the invalid assumptions and false theories presently taught in teacher education.

Secondly, our ideas on the education of teachers must take into account the millennia of successful educational practice reflected on the African continent and in the African diaspora. This experience has much to offer to discussions of aim, method and content, for anyone, African or other. We already see the enrichment of the Western early childhood curriculum, teacher education and parenting practice, because of the research done on African nurturing practices in such places as Uganda, Johannesburg and Dakar on the African continent. (Ainsworth, 1967; Geber, 1958; Pearce, 1977). Perhaps such popular education strategies as "cooperative" learning would have been "discovered" and considered much earlier had a serious study of African methods of education been undertaken (Shujaa, 1994; T'shaka, 1994).

Not only is there a good record of African practices in education along with theories and philosophies, the residuals of those practices still operate on the African continent and in the diaspora. I have experienced excellent education

in the African community firsthand. My grandfather, father and mother were teachers. Most of my father's siblings were also teachers. I attended "segregated" schools from kindergarten through the fifth grade. Because of my father's work as an educator, I encountered hundreds of educators in the African community in Texas, and from other parts of the country as well. Although the range of quality varied among schools, as might be expected, the very fact that there were many excellent schools is something to be noted, given the segregated conditions of the society.

Not only were many schools excellent, there were also many excellent teachers throughout the African community in churches and in clubs. The educators that I knew worked hard to create bonds among students, bonding with the school, bonding the school to the community and bonding the community to destiny. Heavy emphasis was placed on basic skills achievement, but in addition to that, to character development. My teachers sought to develop a student who was respectful, knowledgeable, caring, a student who belonged to the community and who would act responsibly, a student who was healthy and clear about his/her identity. Some of my teachers sought to produce students who were open minded and questioning and who were creative.

There were many legendary teachers in the African American community, like the great Benjamin Elija Mays, former President of Morehouse College in Atlanta. Students in the black colleges and universities and even in the high schools often recounted the work of great teachers. These teachers were

visionaries. They were more parents and nurturers than technicians. They were seen as elders. They were role models. They were dedicated and demanding. They were imbued with a sense of mission and purpose, and they were sacrificial.

It is interesting to note the dialogue in discussions of school problems today: "school reform," "minimum competency," "effective schools," "school choice," "charter schools," "vocational education," "school restructuring," "site-based management," "total quality management," "minority to majority bussing," "year-round schools," "magnet schools" and, strangely, "boot camp." While the effort marked by these labels certainly deserves attention, little in this language for talking about school problems seems to refer to the higher-order goals of intellectual development, character development and, of course, spiritual development.

So once again, it is necessary to delimit this discussion to the more basic goals of basic skills achievement and other goals thought to be universal in mainstream teaching and learning and in mainstream teacher education. Therefore, this discussion can proceed with the understanding that <u>extremely important parts of an ideal education and socialization process are not being handled here</u>.

THE PRAGMATICS

Let's get down to the pragmatics of what is required for change in teacher education, given this background.

First let me be clear. Pragmatically, I believe that there are basic limits on the practice of education and socialization in the public schools. I do not demand, nor do I expect, that public schools in the United States can accommodate substantially an extension of the excellent educational traditions of African or African diasporan people. For example, I know that the public schools do not deal with spiritual matters at all, at least in any open and legally sanctioned way. I also know that the aims of schooling in the United States tend to be limited to preparing students for jobs, for the world of work, not for transformation and character development.

Right now, the national will is wavering on the widely publicized commitment to Goals 2,000, an excellence level of education for all. Neither Democrats nor Republicans are raising this standard now and keeping attention focused on it. Resources for Goals 2,000 are dwindling. So, from an African perspective, the public schools' goals, or lack of them, at present, will require local schools to help students to reach limited mediocre standards.

But, since we have yet to reach the old goals of "minimum competency," reaching the mediocre standards will require a major effort. In discussing teacher education for this paper, I am concerned that all students, including especially African students, reach the highest standards set by the schools. So the pragmatics that follow are in response to the limited goal of meeting public school standards. To reach excellence, critical and creative thought, character development, and spiritual growth, will impose even greater demands on the

teacher education process than current will of the public or plans of policy makers compel.

So while this paper has a narrow focus, an African perspective, it has broad implications for teaching and learning in general.

THE PRACTICUM SITE. Given the fact that hundreds of successful teachers and successful schools in the United States exist now and have existed in the past for African American students, a successful teacher education program would have to reflect an awareness of this, and the use of those school sites, almost exclusively, for the training of teachers to work with students. Otherwise, teachers come away from the teacher education experience with no sense of hope that all children can be educated, engendered largely because of the trainees' exposure to failing systems, and the failure to expose them to excellent systems. Naturally, the same principle would apply for training teachers to be successful with any group. However, again, by thinking of how to be successful with the traditionally lowest performing groups, we understand how to prepare teachers for all children.

An appropriate practicum site for the training of teachers to be successful with African American students should be <u>in a school where the overwhelming majority of the teachers are successful with those students</u>. Ideally, such schools could be very much like the ones described by Dr. Sizemore (Sizemore, 1988; Sizemore, Brosard & Harrigan, 1982). In other words, the general level of student

performance should be far above the current average, whether they are 'minorities' or not. In the case of the schools described by Dr. Sizemore, children's academic achievement test scores fall generally within the top quartile, in spite of the fact that their socio-economic status and, in particular, their income, is in the bottom quartile. Of course, comparative (normative) ranking may mean little unless the performance of the top quartile meets certain excellent criterion levels. In the final analysis, the teacher should be trained in a school that serves African American children so well that their achievement is competitive with students anywhere, or trained in a school that meets the needs of other traditionally low performing groups.

The practicum site should be one where the whole school has made a commitment to being a practicum site, and not merely one or two teachers. The support of the whole faculty and administration for the teacher training mission is essential. The structure of the school as a teacher training site should reflect that mission.

The practicum site should be structured in such a way that training is possible. This means that there are appropriate physical spaces for intern and master teacher to meet and that there are appropriate places for staff development to be conducted on site for the whole faculty. Teachers should be trained at a site where ongoing staff development is a priority for all staff. Additionally, one would expect that minimal technological support would be provided in this day and age. The type of technical support would include

classrooms with viewing rooms, two-way viewing windows, and video tape play-back capability. Above all, the structure must provide appropriate and sufficient time for teacher training, for debriefing and planning, for observation and demonstration.

Too often, the practicum site is selected based on availability and willingness of teachers to assume the "burden" of a student teacher, rather than on its qualification as a training site.

There are special programs and regular school settings where the success of African American students is due to a formally organized staff development process. For example, Project SEED (see the program in the Dallas Public Schools, Director, Hamid Ebrahimi) has been training teachers for more than two decades; hundreds have been trained to teach African American children and others higher level, abstract, conceptually-oriented mathematics, and to do this at the Kindergarten through the sixth grade level. In some cases special education students have also been taught higher math!

The success of the children in Project SEED is important, but what may be even more important is that there is an articulated routine for preparing teachers to become successful, and that with this preparation they do become successful. It would seem that a good teacher education program would benefit from a survey of such successful teacher education practices. The survey of the variety of ways in which successful teachers are trained to work with any student population can yield principles by which other successful teacher education

approaches can be organized.

THE MASTER TEACHER. The teacher education structure must include a valid internship for teachers in training. A valid internship would include the presence of a real "master" teacher, a master teacher being one who among other things is successful with children who are otherwise predicted to fail, such as low-income African American children. A valid internship includes a turn-taking structure between the master teacher and the teacher intern. A turn-taking structure means that both must be present in the classroom environment for most of the time, both participating in demonstration and critique of each other's work and the work of other teachers. A valid internship requires that master teacher and intern participate in coplanning of classroom lessons. A valid internship requires that both master teacher and intern be engaged in appropriate outreach activities to the home and community of students that they serve. A valid internship requires that both master teacher and apprentice be involved in the cultural socialization of the students in their charge, both within and beyond the classroom.

THE MASTER PROFESSOR. Teacher educators in the higher education community must also meet certain standards. "Clinical professors," supervisors of field experiences, must be able to demonstrate that they can raise the achievement of traditionally low performing students to levels of excellence. The

master professor must be a performer, a master performer! The master professor must be able to articulate the parameters of successful teaching.

Of course, few if any teacher education programs in higher education exercise any quality control of the performance of professors who supervise field experiences. Few, if any, programs require any demonstration by professors of classroom expertise. Some higher education field experience supervisors even argue that teaching expertise is not a prerequisite for their assignment. This is the Achilles tendon of teacher education. Master Professor, Master Teacher and Trainee must all be successful performers! Otherwise, we will never break the vicious cycle of training new teachers in poor and invalid learning environments.

The teacher educators in the foundations areas (psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, policy studies area, research area, etc.) are not required to be "clinical" experts. However, they must be required to demonstrate a broad base of content knowledge. They must understand their disciplines from a pluralistic cultural perspective.

THE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE BASE. The teacher education program for teachers to serve African American children, or other traditionally excluded or poorly served children, must require some level of proficiency in cultural knowledge about African people or other people. It is virtually impossible for teachers to develop a profound respect for their African students if they cannot even locate African people in time (chronology) and in space (geography), in

terms of the thematics of the evolution of their culture (Hilliard, 1995b; Hilliard, Payton-Stewart, & Williams, 1990; Karenga, 1982; Osei, 1995; Woodson, 1968; Williams, 1883). Having no sense of chronology, no sense of where African people are in the world, and no sense of African culture, limits a teacher's ability to understand students with whom they may work today. Such teachers see students merely in episodic terms. Such teachers cannot place students in context. This results in varying degrees of alienation of students from school experiences, the impairment of communication, a reduction in motivation and effort, and ultimately in low achievement.

There can be no recognition without information. There can be no respect without recognition. How can new teachers, even new teachers who are African, but who have no respect (information and recognition) for African people, teach them successfully? How can teachers get the information when it does not appear in the teacher education curriculum?

For all intents and purposes, there is little meaningful information about African people in the traditional undergraduate liberal arts curriculum. And then this deficient curriculum is followed by a deficient teacher education curriculum with "foundations" coursework in psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, linguistics and research, etc., essentially devoid of meaningful materials about African people. Not only that: at the same time, many of these disciplines convey false and distorted and even defamatory information about Africans, with the little that is presented. Finally, there is an implied universality

about the curriculum in the traditional foundations courses, even though most of it applies mainly to student or school environments reflecting European/American culture.

Given that there are so many African children who are served by the schools, and given the notoriously low levels of academic achievement for these children, it borders on professional malpractice to continue to offer teacher training that is unaffected by the academic knowledge base that does exist about African people, but which is unknown and therefore unused.

THE STUDY OF THE ORIGIN, DYNAMICS AND CONSEQUENCES OF WHITE SUPREMACY. The problem of white supremacy is very difficult to discuss, due to massive denial and to the sensitive nature of the issue. And yet this is a central fact of Western civilization for the past two hundred years, at least. The benign and superficial terms "human relations," "diversity," "multiculturalism," etc., do not begin to illuminate the structure and function of white supremacy. This problem intrudes into teacher education at every point. It must be examined honestly, courageously and completely. There is a body of literature appropriate for this purpose (Ani, 1994; Bengu, 1975; Blyden, 1994; Hodge, Struckmann & Trost, 1975; Wilhelm, 1971; Wobogo, 1990; Weinberg, 1977).

We may argue about the causes of white supremacy or about its age (Wobogo, 1990). Yet what really matters is understanding how it works, especially how it works through the schooling process. Precisely, what are its methods,

strategies and techniques? (Almaguer, 1994).

For example, we know that white supremacy systems define others as 'uncivilized,' 'pagan,''non-human,' 'not capable.' We know that oppressed populations, and especially their leaders, are demonized. We know that the history and culture of oppressed people is suppressed, distorted and destroyed. We know that a variety of divide-and-conquer tactics are used.

We may have a better chance to defeat the strategies if we become conscious of them. Teachers are bound ethically to study white supremacy in the schooling process.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR TRAINEE. A successful teacher education program requires that the teachers graduating from training demonstrate successful performance. Successful performance is the ability to produce a high quality educational achievement level for all students, without regard for ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Virtually all students should be able to meet criterion levels (not merely norm levels) of performance equivalent to a college preparatory curriculum, by the time of high school graduation, the 'at risk,' 'slow learner,' or 'deprived' categorization not withstanding (Hilliard, Sizemore, et al., 1984).

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE FOR TRAINEE. A successful teacher education program requires that teachers in training have a broad-based awareness of best

practice with African American students. This means that one result of a good teacher education program is that trainees would be familiar intimately with many examples of successful education of African American students. In addition, trainees would be aware of the literature that records, documents and interprets the efforts of successful schools and teachers. In other words, not only must a trainee have an experience in a best practice environment, the trainee must be able to generalize about best practice by comparing his or her own experience with that of educators in other settings.

THEORY AND ITS APPLICATION FOR TRAINEE. A good teacher education program requires not only that best practice be located, but that there is a theory to explain why best practice is successful. It is unfortunate that the greater proportion of professional literature on teaching and learning seems to be concerned with explaining school failure. It is hard to find literature that reports on successful practice, and harder still to find literature that offers theories as to why some teachers and schools are so overwhelmingly successful. But theory should be a guide to practice. There should be no non-theoretical practitioners, and there should be no non-practical theoreticians. This is especially true when it comes to teaching the African American child in the context of an environment where respected educators, sociologists and psychologists have suggested that teaching and learning cannot be successful for them.

JUDGING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING. The teacher education program must provide for the critique of bad and irrelevant practice in teaching. So much of what is done in staff development and in teaching practices in general may be intuitively satisfying, but empirically bankrupt. Many educators are not challenged to critique teaching to the point where they can identify, critique and analyze bad practice or irrelevant practice in teaching. As a result, the teaching/learning environment (regular practice and staff development) is often loaded down with gimmicks and fads that have no prospect of doing anything more than absorbing enormous resources without commensurate benefits in teaching and learning.

NETWORKING IN THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY. An appropriate teacher education program should require that the intern participate in and build a network among interns and educators who are successful. If teaching is a profession, then it is the obligation of teachers to participate in a professional dialogue that is valid and meaningful. This dialogue may be conducted through professional organizations, through informal study groups, through staff development activities or through university sponsored professional activities, etc. The main thing is that every teacher is obligated to be a part of a dialogue among successful educators, especially successful educators of African American children.

SUMMARY

Many educators, including teacher educators, have come to doubt the learning capacities of and the efficacy of teaching for African people. Many have also come to see African people as if their conditions, social, economic and political, were their identity, leaving aside any cultural or ethnic identity. Many educators have come to view schools as neutral places that offer an equivalent quality of instruction to all students, thereby denying or ignoring the "savage inequalities" (Kozol, 1991) in the provision of services that are so prevalent. These misreadings of the teaching/learning context and of the participants in the process (i.e. ignoring inequitable treatment) are at the root of the poor design of teacher education.

The cycle of school failure for traditionally excluded students can be broken simply by looking closely at teachers and teacher educators who do not fail and then by imitating them. Having overcome failure on traditional school objectives, we can then turn our attention to those things which nurture and enhance the highest human possibilities for mind, body and spirit.

The culture of Africa still has lessons to teach. The university can ill afford to ignore these lessons. The culturally chauvinistic "university" can. There can be no valid university if it ignores the African experience.

CONCLUSION

Every student is a part of a cultural ethnic tradition. In addition, all students exist in a political and economic environment, an environment which, for the

African student, has included various practices of white supremacy, conscious and unconscious, intentional and unintentional. A teacher education process that ignores these two realities is doomed from the start.

There have always been ordinary people who knew how to teach African children (and any other ethnic and socioeconomic groups) so that they achieved excellence. These teachers were not magicians (Hilliard, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994). We must not mystify a straight forward process! Professional teachers education programs that are constructed on the assumption that we have a discovery problem of how to teach African children or that some super human is required are a part of the problem, not a part of the solution.

"Regular" and "special" teacher education must be value added. Trained teachers must be better at producing excellent achievement, on the whole, than those who are not trained. Otherwise, there is no need for teacher training. There are many examples of value-added teacher education (Backler & Eakin, 1993; Hilliard, 1991; Sizemore, Brosard & Harrigan, 1982).

Many of the things mentioned in this paper, written from the point of view of an African American teacher educator, will apply to teacher education in general, not only to teacher education for the African American child. However, by discussing this matter with specific reference to the African American child, we can easily illuminate some of the substantial weaknesses in the teacher education process in general.

I have had the experience of teaching students, old and young; "special

education," "regular" education and "gifted;" all "races" and many different language groups; all socio-economic levels, in Africa, Europe, North and South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. I have always felt that any student assigned to me became my responsibility. I never looked for excuses to explain why students did not achieve. When my students' achievement levels were too low, I could usually discover what I had done wrong, what I had not done and what I needed to do to make all students successful.

In a nation that has been a home for apartheid, that has hosted a variety of white supremacy ideologies (and still does), that has tolerated the idea that the poor of all "racial"/ethnic groups are unable, that is yet lukewarm at best on its commitment to ensure that every child does succeed, it is important to learn from a variety of perspectives about educational excellence. The African perspective is but one.

But for African people, still reeling under the hammer blows of neo-colonization, resurgent anti-democratic ideologies (D'Souza, 1995; Montague, 1980; Murray & Herrnstein, 1994), we cannot wait for a more humane pedagogy to evolve. We must assert it, produce it. We must draw from the wellspring of our traditions, and from all successful traditions. We must change the world.

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